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MIGRANT WORKERS IN AGRICULTURE

The farm laborer at best is a young man who is working as a hired laborer only temporarily, while he is accumulating enough capital to buy a team of horses and some farm machinery and to obtain experience which would enable him to start farming as a renter. He is perhaps one of the neighbor boys who is working for a man whom he has known all his life. He probably lives as a part of that man's family. This is the typical hired man, a figure rapidly disappearing from the agricultural scene as he is being replaced more and more by the seasonal worker and by the use of time- and labor-saving machinery.

At worst these laborers are part of that great mass of migratory farm workers whose paths weave a net work over three-fourths of the States of this country. Little is known about migratory farm laborers except that many of them move almost ceaselessly throughout the year in search of work and that this search takes them not only great distances but in some cases into a number of States. Many of them are small farmers seeking to supplement their income at seasonal work. Others were farmers, owners and tenants who for reason of drought, foreclosure, declining incomes and other reasons resorted to migratory farm labor. Still others have been recruited from non-farming occupation because of unemployment and the general depression of the early 1930's.

Widespread interest and concern with the problems of migrants have been evident, but much remains to be learned about their numbers, qualifications, reasons for migration, and about the length of time that the individual remains in the category of a migrant farm worker. Some significant studies have been made from time to time of special groups in areas selected by various governmental agencies.

The Bureau of Agricultural Economics, cooperating with other agencies, is now engaged in a broad study of the migrant problem as it exists in Arizona, California, Oregon, Washington, and Idaho. This study is being made in cooperation with the Farm Security Administration and the State Agricultural Experiment Stations of Arizona, Washington, and Oregon.

Migrant studies have also been made in the past by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, the Works Progress Administration, the Farm Security Administration, and others for selected sections of the country; but, as yet, no study is available concerning the migrant movement and its implication as a whole.

Present Conditions

In 1935 there were 31,801,000 persons living on 6,812,350 farms -- an average of 4.7 persons to a farm. There were 12,407,000 persons engaged in agriculture. The number of wage workers in January 1935 was 1,546,000, but in July of that year there were 2,679,000 workers. The number of farms employing hired laborers in January 1935 was 967,594, while in July 1,482,697/^{farms}, approximately one-fifth of all farms, employed hired laborers. The difference between the number of hired workers employed in agriculture in January and July (1,033,738) represents, for the most part, a conservative estimate of the local seasonal and migratory farm labor numbers. Map 1 shows the distribution of the farm population as of January 1935.

In November 1937 there were 971,000 totally unemployed and emergency workers living on farms. They were more numerous in the Southern States and relatively few in the Corn Belt (Map 2). In general, the unemployed population is greatest in areas of high birth rates, hilly or poor soils, and small farms. In addition, there were 576,000 partly unemployed males living on farms in the United States in 1937. These were more numerous in the Cotton Belt, particularly in the bottom lands of eastern Arkansas and southeastern Missouri (Map 3).

This situation has been a growing one. Since 1929 migration of excess farm people to the cities has been declining and during 1931 there was actually a net migration from the cities to the farms. Normally and prior to 1929 the cities had received a large part of their population from rural areas. An excess of hundreds of thousands of persons moved each year from rural areas to the cities prior to 1929, due to higher birth rates in rural areas. Since 1929 there has been accumulating an excess of people on farms (Chart 1).

This accumulation has caused an estimated increase in unemployment on farms of 1,112,000 persons, of which approximately 1,009,000 are males and 103,000 are females. These estimates are based on the assumption that 1930 conditions of employment in agriculture would obtain in 1940, as represented by the proportion of the rural farm population actually employed in agriculture in 1930, by sex. In addition, there is to be expected that an equivalent of 526,000 more persons (480,000 males and 46,000 females) will be unemployed in 1940 compared with 1930 because of technological improvements, declines in foreign markets, drought, erosion, changes in sizes of farms, and other causes (table 1).

The combined effects of these factors have contributed materially to an increased amount of seasonal employment in agriculture. Improved means of transportation and the physical condition and the biological nature of crops have made it possible that workers may move about and obtain more continuous employment. Each year hundreds of thousands of farm laborers cross State lines to follow the crops in their harvest season. More than three-fourths of the States in the Union are included in the routes which they travel (Map 4). Relatively little reliable information is known about these migratory workers as to exactly where the migrant streams begin, how large they are at various points along their routes, and where

they end. Workers undoubtedly drift into the streams at various points and drift out again along the way; probably comparatively few travel the entire distances represented by any one of these streams.

Types of Seasonal Workers

A distinction between local seasonal and migratory laborers should be made. The local seasonal worker may be a member of a neighboring farm family, he may be a resident of a city and employed in non-agricultural activity most of the time, or he may live in a nearby village and go daily to some farm job during seasons. Frequently, he may become a migratory worker also, for on occasions he may travel many miles in pursuit of seasonal farm work. Examples of this type of seasonal workers are found in the cases of occasional rural Kentuckians who work in the Indiana tomato fields, the people of Colorado and Utah who go to the hop fields of Washington, the Georgia rural people who travel out for cotton picking, and the Philadelphians who find work in the Jersey cranberry bogs. These local seasonal workers, in any event, have a home base from which they operate and presumably they enjoy the social and civic services such as schools, churches, and other community activities, along with neighbors in the home community.

It is difficult to draw clear-cut lines of distinction between types of migrant workers in agriculture. However, migrant workers may be roughly classified as four types: (1) The more completely adjusted migratory-casual workers who have become fairly common in areas where agriculture does not support all of its labor force on a resident basis; (2) those who are in the process of readjustment, who have become uprooted from one environment and are seeking to establish themselves under new conditions; (3) occasional migratory laborers who during much of their time are local seasonal laborers or persons normally employed at other occupations but who, on occasions, go elsewhere seeking employment in agriculture; (4) the tramp who is often confused with migrant agricultural workers and is often found among migratory laborer groups.

An example of the more completely adjusted migratory-casual worker is to be found in the Mexican migrant laborers in Texas who work largely in the harvesting of cotton, but who, also, are able to obtain labor between the cotton seasons in the Crystal City and Corpus Christi truck areas, and the onion crops around Corpus Christi and Dallas. An example of the second class of migrant laborers may be found in the "removal migrants" who have left the Great Plains areas with the hope of settlement on the Pacific Coast, particularly in the States of California, Oregon, Washington, and Idaho. Examples of the third type have already been mentioned in connection with the above discussion of local seasonal laborers who on occasions migrate in search of employment in agriculture. The tramp is to be found intermingled with the seasonal and migratory workers in almost every locality where an abundance of temporary farm laborers is needed.

Causes of Migration

Causes of migration are many, and not all of them originate on the farms. Perhaps no one factor alone is the cause for any one family's removing itself from its original surrounding to seek work by following the harvests. Below are listed some of the more important causes:

The seasonal nature of agriculture: Agricultural employment is a seasonal business for almost all those engaged in it. Except on the highly diversified farms and such specialized farms as dairying, the seasonal demands for labor vary greatly between the winter slack season and the spring, summer or fall peak seasons, depending upon the nature of the farm enterprise. Any tendency toward specialization in crop production tends also to emphasize the variations in need for workers between slack and peak seasons. The commercial and specialized farms have the greatest need for seasonal workers. The more general crop farms furnish more continuous employment.

Size of farms: There is evidence that in some types of farming in certain sections of the country, large-scale equipment tends to reduce the seasonal fluctuations in demand for labor. This is particularly true with large-scale wheat-producing farms where the combine harvester is used and the farm operator, with his family, may perform a large part of the labor requirements. However, with most large farms, the operator finds that his ability to perform the labor required is quite limited in certain seasons, when he finds it to advantage to employ seasonal laborers. Under present conditions it is less expensive to the farmer to recruit the required labor force when they are needed and lay them off afterwards, rather than to hold them over the slack seasons.

Lowered labor needs: It has been estimated that in 1935 by the adoption of farm tractors, trucks, and automobiles labor requirements were reduced by the equivalent of 345,000 workers. This trend is still going on. Undoubtedly fewer have been completely displaced, since the reduction in requirements actually diverted much of the labor saved to other activities.

The improvement of seed, breeding stock, and general farm practice have made possible the production of present demands for all farm products -- for both domestic and foreign consumption -- with 602,000 fewer farm workers in 1939 than in 1930 (Table 1).

Drought: The droughts of 1934 and 1936 have materially increased migration, and the number of migrant farm workers. Since 1930 probably no one factor accounted for more migration to the Pacific Coast than this. A sample study of 468 workers in the Yakima Valley of the State of Washington shows 252 with less than one year's residence in the county and 216 with a year or more. One hundred twenty-nine of the 252 newcomers had entered the State during the year, and 59 had come from the drought States, 46 from California and Oregon, and 24 from other States. Twenty percent were direct arrivals from the drought States. According to a study conducted by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, in cooperation with the Farm Security Administration and State Agricultural Experiment Stations of Oregon, Washington, and Idaho and other collaborating agencies, it appears that 168,964 families entered California between January 1930 and May 1939 who were still in California and had children in the schools there in 1939. The California border count of persons entering California in need of manual employment shows that 51.3 percent of the 312,000 persons entering the State during the four years prior to July 1939 came from the Great Plains States and an additional 26.2 percent came from the States of Arizona, Arkansas, and Missouri, combined; more than one-fifth (22.7 percent) came from Oklahoma alone. Another study, by Conrad Taeuber of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics and Charles S. Hoffman of the Farm Security Administration, shows that, of 1,000 farm residents who moved from their North Dakota farms during

1936, 40 percent went to other States. Half of these went to the States of Washington, Oregon, California, and Idaho, with Washington receiving 50 percent of them. The droughts were not the sole cause of the migration and the distress of the Great Plains areas. Migration from the areas was occurring prior to the droughts of 1934 and 1936. According to Conrad Taeuber and C. C. Taylor, the birth rates of the Great Plains States are among the highest in the entire country, with births to farm women exceeding deaths of farm persons by nearly 100,000 per year between 1910 and 1935. Had there been no migration to or from farms the total population would have increased to that extent. Actually, between 1910 and 1935 in this area there was a net migration away from farms of approximately two and one-half million persons. Practically all of this was in the period 1920-35.

Erosion: There are 414 million acres of crop land in the United States. An additional 100 million acres have been either ruined for practical cultivation or seriously damaged by erosion. About 100 million acres still in cultivation have been impoverished by loss of top-soil -- and about another 100 million acres are being made so at a rapid rate.

Erosion is a relatively slow process so that it is difficult to associate it with migration but it probably has forced many farm families from the land over a period of years. Some of them may have become migrants.

Increased rural farm population: The higher birth rate among farm people has been such that for the years prior to 1929 the pressure of people on the land has been reduced through migration of farm people, principally youths, to the cities. Since 1929, however, there was a sharp decline in the cityward movement of farm people so that (Chart 1) there has been an increasing rural-farm population. During the period 1931-33 there was actually a net migration from the cities to the farms. The effect of this piling up of people on the farms is shown in Map 5. Attempts to readjust this picture have undoubtedly resulted in the search for work elsewhere, first through the replacement of hired workers by family workers who either returned from the cities, or who, except for the economic conditions that halted the rural-urban migration, would have gone to the cities; second, in the search for whatever laboring opportunities that were presented, some of these people entered the farm labor market, which has caused migration in search of even fragmentary employment.

Farm population has increased fastest in the poorer areas. The 400 counties lowest in living standards are among the highest in population increase. This was true between 1930 and 1935 and it is undoubtedly continuing. (See Map 5). In spite of migration to cities, farm population between 1930 and 1935 increased 1,650,000. In 1940 it is expected that there will be 2,820,000 rural farm persons more than in 1930 who will be seeking work in agriculture if the 1930 percentages on employment obtain.

Decline in foreign markets: The trend of exports of American farm products, as measured in terms of average acres required for their production, has been downward since 1920, and sharply so since the beginning of the recent depression. Exports of individual commodities, however, have not all followed this general trend (Table 2). In the case of cotton, tobacco and apples, exports increased somewhat during the latter part of the twenties, but have, of course, dropped off since the beginning of the depression. Lard and wheat exports, on the other hand, have been declining over a longer period of years, and show a greater reduction as compared with previous higher levels. Some of the reduction in the volume of our



exports following the war was the consequence of a normal resumption of agricultural production by European nations and of an expansion of production in new countries. Most of the reduction which has taken place since 1930, however, is to be attributed to the general economic breakdown throughout the world and to the more restrictive foreign trade policies which accompanied it -- our own as well as those of other countries.

Migratory Routes

Although migrants create a set of problems peculiar to themselves, their migrations follow definite migratory farm labor patterns. The step from removal to relocation on the land is a difficult one. In most cases, it is delayed. During the lapse of time between removal and relocation, these former farmers and "hired men" mingle with the more veteran migratory masses. The various routes of migration may be briefly outlined as follows:

Migration in Eastern United States: Migration in the eastern sections of the United States occurs in at least two or three waves. Each wave appears to begin in Florida, but the source of the labor is probably from all of the Southeastern States including Florida. Workers congregate in Florida for the harvest of citrus fruit and early berries and truck crops.

The first wave of migration out of Florida is for the harvesting of berries, and after leaving Florida evidently divides into two segments, one continuing up the Atlantic seaboard into North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, and New Jersey; the other moves westward along the Gulf Coast into Alabama and southern Louisiana and north in two streams into central and western Arkansas and Missouri, and into western Tennessee and Kentucky, but both probably end in Michigan.

The second and third waves are for the harvest of truck crops, principally beans and peas, and for potato harvest, respectively. These waves very probably continue up the Atlantic seaboard through the Carolinas, Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, New Jersey, and probably into New York state.

Migratory workers engage in the harvest of blueberries beginning in Florida and Alabama, and continuing through eastern Tennessee, thence to Virginia, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, and probably into New Jersey. Others work in the harvesting of apples in North Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, and New York; and others are said to be employed in the Connecticut tobacco harvest. Whether these crops cause additional waves of migratory workers or are branches of the main streams is not known, but it is likely that the workers engaged in the harvest of blueberries and of apples constitute separate waves or streams of migration and the harvest of the Connecticut tobacco crop is incidental to the migration for other crops.

The Great Plains Wheat Migration: Before the rather widespread use of the combine-harvester became effective in reducing labor demand, large numbers of workers migrated between northern Texas and the Dakotas and Canada. This work begins in June in Texas and Oklahoma and ends in the Dakotas and Canada in August. The widespread use of the combine harvester has sharply reduced the need for migrant workers, but large numbers of migratory workers are still available, particularly in the Spring Wheat Belt which includes the Dakotas and all or parts of surrounding States.

Migration in Southwestern United States: The use of migratory labor in the Southwest, particularly in Texas and Oklahoma, for the most part is due to large-scale farming, and to the westward expansion of the cotton area. The development of the use of migrant laborers occurred first in the more sparsely populated southern and western areas and later overlapped into the more thickly populated areas of the Blackland in East Central Texas. Migration in this area exclusive of the wheat migration described above is largely in the harvest of cotton, but in Texas, a considerable amount of migratory labor is used in citrus crops in the Lower Rio Grande Valley and in certain vegetable areas in the lower Rio Grande valley, and around Crystal City, Corpus Christi, and Dallas.

Cotton migration begins as early as June in southern Texas and as late as August or September in north Texas and Oklahoma and ends sometimes as late as January and February in North Texas and Oklahoma. The more adjusted migratory casual workers in Texas leave the cotton crop as early as the first part of December to return to the citrus and vegetable work. Thus, these migratory workers follow the principal crop, cotton, between June and December and work in citrus and vegetable crops during the other seasons of the year.

A small number of the workers engaged in the migratory crop harvest labor in this area continue with cotton harvest operations into Arizona and California. The overlap of this stream of migration with that of the Pacific Coast occurs in two ways. Apparently, a much greater part of the overlap is the result of the movement of persons who are in the process of seeking to reestablish themselves and who desire temporarily migratory labor employment to facilitate the readjustment process. A much smaller part of the overlapping group is believed to be the more seasoned migratory-casual workers, some of whom are probably experimenting with new routes.

Sugar Beet Migration: In the process of the expansion of the sugar beet industry families of laborers were recruited by the sugar-processing factories to provide the labor force necessary for hand labor in the beet fields. These workers were brought into the area in the spring each year and returned to their homes after the crop was harvested. Since the earlier days of expansion, more and more of these workers remained in the area between seasons, and encouragement of this by the sugar companies has been the tendency because of the expense of recruiting and transporting laborers. As a result the volume of labor migration has undoubtedly been reduced materially. In 1933 approximately 110,000 persons were under contract, but just how many were migrants, and how many are migrants now, is not known.

Pacific Coast Migration: In California, agricultural crops requiring a significant amount of labor are produced from as far north as Tehama County and southward to San Diego and Imperial Counties -- a distance of 800 miles. The need for migrants in Oregon was based on a harvest of apples, pears, prunes, nuts, and hops. The demand for seasonal workers in Washington is based on the apple and hop operations in the Yakima Valley and Wenatchee areas and the Puget Sound truck and berry sections. In the case of other western growing areas, the seasonal requirements are met by a mixture of removal migrants, regular migratory workers, local harvest hands, and recruits from nearby towns and cities. It is believed that migration of workers in this area is largely confined to local communities with intermittent search for work over longer distances. Analysis of data is now under-

way for this area by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics. The final results may show that the more established workers are migrants in the sense that they have recently arrived in the State but now that they are there, they have become, for the most part, local seasonal laborers who operate from a home base and obtain a large proportion of their income from sources nearby and a smaller part from more remote localities.

Summary: Through migration, laborers in Eastern United States and on the Pacific Coast obtain employment through the successive ripening of various crops in the several areas. The wheat migration is based on the northward movement of ripening wheat, starting in Texas, Oklahoma and ending in the Dakotas and Canada. The southwestern migration, especially in Texas, is largely a response to the successive ripening periods of a single crop in different sections, but these people also find supplemental employment in the citrus and truck areas of all three States. In sugar beets the movement of workers is largely from a point of origin to the area of work and back again.

Numbers of Migrants

Accurate information is lacking regarding the number of seasonal and migratory workers but it is estimated that there are from 1 to 2 million of them. The Farm Security Administration estimates that there are some 500,000 families following the several migratory routes. These families, if the families average three to the family, would make a total of 1,500,000 persons.

Regardless of their exact numbers, these thousands of homeless people create problems of housing, health, child and adult education, and relief.

Income: Statistics on the income of migrant workers in all areas for which data are available indicate that median average earnings by areas range between \$154.00 in Texas for 1937 and \$574 in California for the 1936-37 year. Table 3 shows these data for 7 scattered studies.

Table 4 shows wage rates and related data for April 1, 1939 with comparisons for earlier years.

Of the total number of farms in the country (6,812,350) approximately 1,482,697 farms employ wage labor. This is, of course, a factor in the frequent moves of the migrants in their search for work and a large part of their income goes for travel expenses. This frequently amounts to a considerable proportion of the migrants' total income.

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Many factors contribute to the migratory labor problem. Most of these -- such as population pressure, land and equipment costs, industrial and agricultural maladjustments, marketing problems, and both rural and urban unemployment -- are still with us. This report does not attempt to describe all causes or other issues, but to state briefly some of the facts that are known.

Tables 4 to 7, which follow, give, in more detail, the results of various studies pertaining to migrant farm workers, and, being to a great degree self-explanatory, are included without text.

TABLE 1. Estimated change in numbers of rural-farm unemployment, 1930-40.

	Total	Males	Females
Rural farm population, 1930			
10 years of age and over (thousands)	23,036	12,243	10,793
Percentage distribution	100.0	53.1	46.9
Rural farm population, 1940 (estimated)			
10 years of age and over (thousands)	25,856	13,730	12,126
(assuming 1/2 net migration, 1920-30)			
Rural farm population increase			
10 years of age and over			
1940 over 1930 (thousands)	2,820	1,487	1,333
Percentage of rural farm population,			
10 years of age and over, employed 1930	39.4	67.9	7.7
Number of increased rural farm population, 10 years			
of age and over, who would seek employment if 1930			
conditions obtain in 1940 (thousands)	1,112	1,009	103
Percentage of all employment in agriculture, 1930 .	100.0	91.3	8.7
Decline in agricultural employment			
(1939 average) ^{1/} (thousands)	602	550	52
Percentage of agricultural employees from			
rural farm population	87.3		
Estimated net job loss to rural farm population			
(thousands)	526	480	46
Estimated increased unemployment in rural farm			
population, 1940 (thousands)	1,638	1,489	149
Source of unemployment			
Population changes (thousands)	1,112	1,009	103
Other causes, including decline in farm			
markets, drought, erosion, and changes			
in size of farms (thousands)	526	480	46

^{1/} Based upon Agricultural Marketing Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture, indices of employment.

TABLE 2. United States Foreign Trade in Agricultural Products.

AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS						
Average : For Years : Ended : June 30. :	Domestic : Exports : :	Cotton : Lint : :	Tobacco : unmanu- : factured :	Lard : Excluding : Neutral :	Wheat : Including : Flour :	Apples : Fresh : :
	Million Dollars	Million 500 lb. Bales.	Million Pounds	Million Pounds	Million Bushels	Million Barrels
1912-16	1,256	9	408	487	191	2
1917-21	2,860	6	497	579	243	2
1922-26	1,951	7	497	854	207	3
1927-31	1,621	8	553	709	175	5
1932-36	715	7	422	393	50	4
1937	732	6	417	104	22	4
1938	891	6	444	190	107	4
1939	683	4	450	239	116	4

AGRICULTURAL IMPORTS						
Other than 7 leading non-competi- tive imports:	Sugar Raw and Refined :	Wool Except Carpet Wool	Tobacco Unmanu- factured :	Hides and skins :	Cotton Unmanu- factured :	
1912-16	671	2	203	56	591	323
1917-21	1,484	3	282	75	546	345
1922-26	1,060	4	186	68	437	367
1927-31	971	4	104	78	433	353
1932-36	497	3	45	63	267	142
1937	959	3	181	69	327	319
1938	597	3	43	68	188	178
1939	493	3	66	76	280	206



TABLE 3. Median family earnings of migratory and seasonal farm workers as reported in selected studies.

The following table represents the results of various studies mentioned in the footnotes of the table.

State		Median annual earnings	Size of sample	Year of sample
New Mexico	<u>1/</u>	\$ 393 (a)	48	1937
New Mexico	<u>1/</u>	300 (b)	20	1937
California	<u>2/</u>	574	136	1936-37
Arizona	<u>3/</u>	393	518	1937
Michigan) Minnesota) Wyoming) Montana)	<u>4/</u>	340	37 ⁴	1935
Washington	<u>5/</u>	357	74	1935-36
Texas	<u>6/</u>	225	-- <u>7/</u>	1937

1/ Johansen, Migratory Workers in New Mexico.

(a) family earnings

(b) unattached workers

2/ California Relief Administration, Agricultural Migratory Laborers in the San Joaquin Valley, Relief and non-relief family earnings combined.

3/ Brown and Cassmore, Migratory Cotton Pickers in Arizona.

4/ Johnson, Elizabeth S., Welfare of Families of Sugar Beet Laborers, Children's Bureau, U. S. Department of Labor.

5/ Landis and Brooks, Farm Labor in the Yakima Valley, Washington -- transient single workers.

6/ Hamilton, C. Horace, Texas Farm Labor Study, unpublished data.

7/ Size of sample not available.

TABLE 4. Farm wage rates and related data, United States, April 1, 1940,
with comparisons

	: Annual : Average : 1910-14	: Jan. 1, : 1939	: Apr. 1, : 1939	: Jan. 1, : 1940	: Apr. 1, : 1940
FARM WAGE INDEX:					
Unadjusted.....	100	117	121	119	124
Adjusted for seasonal variation.....	100	122	123	124	127
FARM WAGE RATES:					
Per month, with board.....	\$22.09	\$24.86	\$27.08	\$25.33	\$27.45
Per month, without board.....	29.18	34.92	35.42	35.27	36.41
Per day, with board.....	1.16	1.20	1.23	1.22	1.26
Per day, without board.....	1.42	1.53	1.53	1.55	1.55
SUPPLY OF AND DEMAND FOR FARM LABOR:					
(Percentage of normal)					
Supply.....	--	94.8	93.0	93.1	92.0
Demand.....	--	79.2	82.8	81.2	84.3
Supply as a percentage of demand.....	--	119.7	112.3	114.7	109.1
FARM EMPLOYMENT INDEXES:					
Total -					
Unadjusted.....	100	73	83	72	81
Adjusted for seasonal variation....	100	90	86	89	84
Family labor -					
Unadjusted.....	100	78	85	77	84
Adjusted for seasonal variation....	100	93	87	92	86
Hired labor -					
Unadjusted.....	100	56	76	55	73
Adjusted for seasonal variation....	100	80	81	79	78
FARM EMPLOYMENT (Thousands of persons)					
Total.....	12,052	8,767	9,960	8,641	9,797
Family labor.....	9,160	7,138	7,773	7,063	7,684
Hired labor.....	2,892	1,629	2,187	1,578	2,113
RELATED INDEXES:					
Prices received by farmers <u>1</u> /.....	100	94	89	99	97 <u>2</u> /
Ratio of prices received to					
farm wage rates.....	100	80	74	83	78
Industrial wage rates <u>3</u> /.....	--	211	211	218	--
Industrial employment <u>4</u> /.....	--	92	94	102	101 <u>5</u> /
Industrial pay rolls <u>4</u> /.....	--	84	86	98	98 <u>5</u> /

1/ As of the 15th of the month.

2/ Mar. 1940 -- latest data available.

3/ Average weekly earnings, New York State factories, June 1914 - 100.

4/ Bureau of Labor Statistics indexes for manufacturing industries revised 1923-25 - 100.

5/ Feb. 1940 - latest data available.

Based on reports from approximately 26,352 correspondents. The data for previous quarters, by states, appear in Crops and Markets for January, April, July, and October.



TABLE 5. Seasonality of Employment in Selected Intensive Crop Areas as Indicated by Percentage of Peak Demand for Labor by Months

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
California - 33 principal counties <u>1/</u>	23.4	24.7	30.9	40.3	63.6	63.4	70.8	79.9	100.0	92.0	43.2	23.6
Central Coast <u>1/</u>	7.4	4.5	16.2	37.2	57.2	56.0	61.3	77.9	91.3	100.0	24.7	1.9
Sacramento Valley <u>1/</u>	.6	.6	3.0	51.8	100.	74.5	49.9	60.8	59.2	30.9	24.8	9.3
San Joaquin Valley <u>1/</u>	8.4	4.1	7.6	8.8	36.1	45.4	70.9	79.5	100.	85.8	45.0	22.0
Southern California <u>1/</u>	64.5	77.5	82.2	65.4	64.4	67.3	69.2	67.9	100.	98.9	55.2	47.3
Arizona - Entire State <u>2/</u>	24.0	17.5	15.8	20.2	34.4	35.0	24.6	20.8	67.8	92.3	100.	94.0
Oregon - Entire State <u>3/</u>	36.9	41.5	53.4	44.7	45.9	74.6	100.	58.6	74.6	67.4	43.3	37.9
Willamette Valley <u>3/</u>	26.2	31.3	41.4	34.0	43.3	91.4	100.	59.4	82.6	53.3	27.2	25.1
Washington - Yakima Valley <u>4/</u>	2.3	3.2	6.5	7.2	8.9	17.7	15.2	19.1	100.	38.6	3.6	2.1

1/ In terms of number of workers, 1935. Source: "Survey of Agricultural Labor Requirements in California, 1935", State Relief Administration of California, San Francisco, December 1935. p.20.

2/ In terms of days labor in 1936. Source: Tetreau, E. D. "Seasonal Labor on Arizona Irrigated Farms" University of Arizona, Tucson. 1937. (mimeographed) Table 2.

3/ In terms of number of man hours required to perform major operations. Source: "A Survey of the Demand for Agricultural Labor in Oregon", Oregon State Planning Board, Portland, December, 1937. Tables 337-8.

4/ Based on monthly averages of weekly requirements for workers. Source: Landis, Paul H. & Brooks, Melvin S. "Farm Labor in the Yakima Valley, Washington". Washington Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletin 343. Pullman. Sec. 1936. Table 8, p. 29

5/ Based on records of carlot shipments of fruit and vegetables from state in 1936.

6/ Based on monthly averages of estimated number of field workers required to harvest weekly shipments of vegetables. Source: Weekly records of shipments from files of "Everglade News" Coral Point, Fla.

TABLE 6. Farm employment in the United States, by regions, 1937, 1938, and 1939.

Geographic Divisions	April 1, 1937	July 1, 1937 1/	April 1, 1938	July 1, 1938 1/	April 1, 1939	July 1, 1939 1/
Farm Employment (Thousands of persons)						
Total family and hired						
New England	248	281	253	284	241	277
Middle Atlantic	586	720	605	719	594	728
East North Central	1,476	1,666	1,469	1,688	1,451	1,611
West North Central	1,575	1,959	1,590	1,942	1,582	1,905
South Atlantic	1,981	2,489	1,988	2,574	1,975	2,458
East South Central	1,639	2,048	1,665	2,010	1,603	2,027
West South Central	1,632	2,170	1,630	2,143	1,573	2,118
Mountain	442	538	404	527	415	501
Pacific	534	543	527	586	526	590
Farm Employment - Family Labor						
New England	162	176	163	175	161	172
Middle Atlantic	406	461	412	458	410	469
East North Central	1,153	1,249	1,156	1,261	1,148	1,209
West North Central	1,288	1,486	1,278	1,459	1,286	1,437
South Atlantic	1,486	1,920	1,511	1,970	1,496	1,859
East South Central	1,398	1,762	1,441	1,749	1,386	1,742
West South Central	1,322	1,621	1,298	1,633	1,268	1,601
Mountain	296	328	286	309	290	305
Pacific	311	311	299	307	328	330
Farm Employment - Hired Labor						
New England	86	105	90	109	80	105
Middle Atlantic	180	259	193	261	184	259
East North Central	323	417	313	427	303	402
West North Central	287	473	312	483	296	468
South Atlantic	495	569	477	604	479	599
East South Central	241	286	224	261	217	285
West South Central	310	549	332	510	305	517
Mountain	146	210	118	218	125	196
Pacific	223	232	228	279	198	260

1/ Supply of and demand for farm labor, and supply-demand ratios revised.

TABLE 7. FARM LABOR: Supply and Demand in the United States,
April 1, 1918-1940.

Year	Supply of Farm Labor (Percentage of Normal)	Demand for Farm Labor (Percentage of Normal)	Supply as Percentage of Demand (Percentage of Normal)
1918	73.4	101.3	72.5
1919	84.9	101.7	83.5
1920	72.9	105.2	69.3
1921	95.8	87.8	109.1
1922	100.2	89.3	112.2
1923	84.3	94.5	89.2
1924	85.0	90.4	94.0
1925	90.6	90.3	100.3
1926	89.7	91.2	98.4
1927	91.2	88.9	102.6
1928	95.8	88.8	107.9
1929	94.2	90.4	104.2
1930	99.7	85.0	117.3
1931	113.6	71.7	158.4
1932	122.4	64.0	191.2
1933	126.3	59.5	212.3
1934	106.8	70.1	152.4
1935	101.8	74.1	137.4
1936	93.8	82.5	113.7
1937	87.4	87.7	99.7
1938	93.9	81.9	114.7
1939	93.0	82.8	112.3
1940	92.0	84.3	109.1

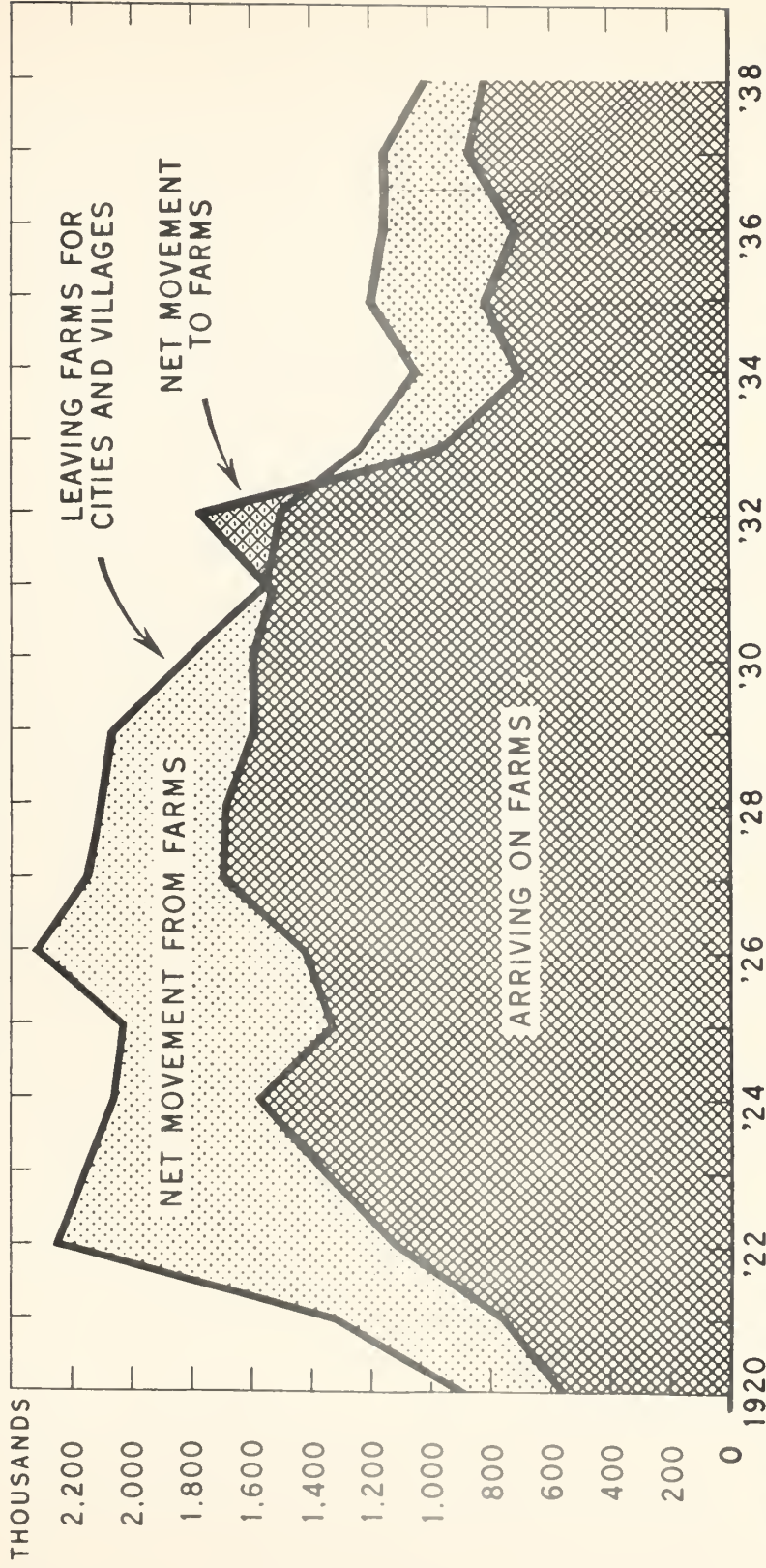
TABLE 8. Cumulative Distribution of Farms and Laborers by Estimated Number of Hired Laborers Per Farm in the United States, July, 1935

		<u>Percent of all farms</u>	<u>Percent of farms employing hired labor</u>
Total number of farms	6,812,350	100.	
Number of farms employing 1 or more hired laborers	1,482,697	21.8	100.
Number of farms employing 4 or more hired laborers	109,535	1.6	7.4
Number of farms employing 8 or more hired laborers	29,598	.4	2.0
Number of farms not employ- ing hired laborers in July	5,329,653	78.2	
		<u>Percent of all hired laborers</u>	
Number of hired laborers on farms employing 1 or more hired laborers	2,679,340	100.	
Number of hired laborers on farms employing 4 or more hired laborers	933,069	34.8	
Number of hired laborers on farms employing 8 or more hired laborers	545,292	20.4	

NOTE: The estimates of hired farm workers in this table do not include the more than 700,000 sharecroppers reported in the 1935 Census. Adapted from Table 4, "Distribution of Hired Farm Laborers in the United States," Julius T. Wendzel. Monthly Labor Review, September 1937, p.567.

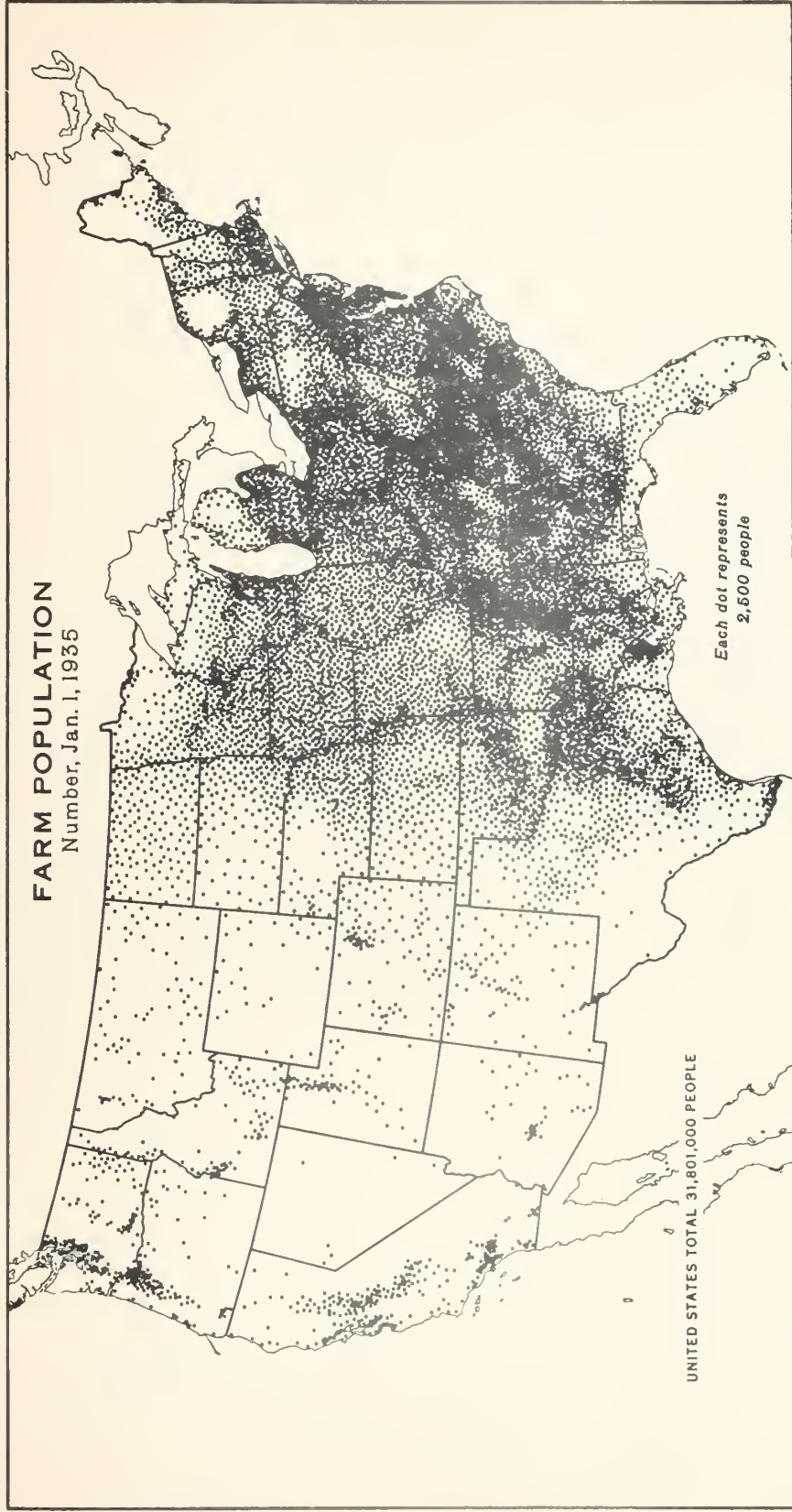
MOVEMENT TO AND FROM FARMS, 1920-38

BIRTHS AND DEATHS NOT TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT



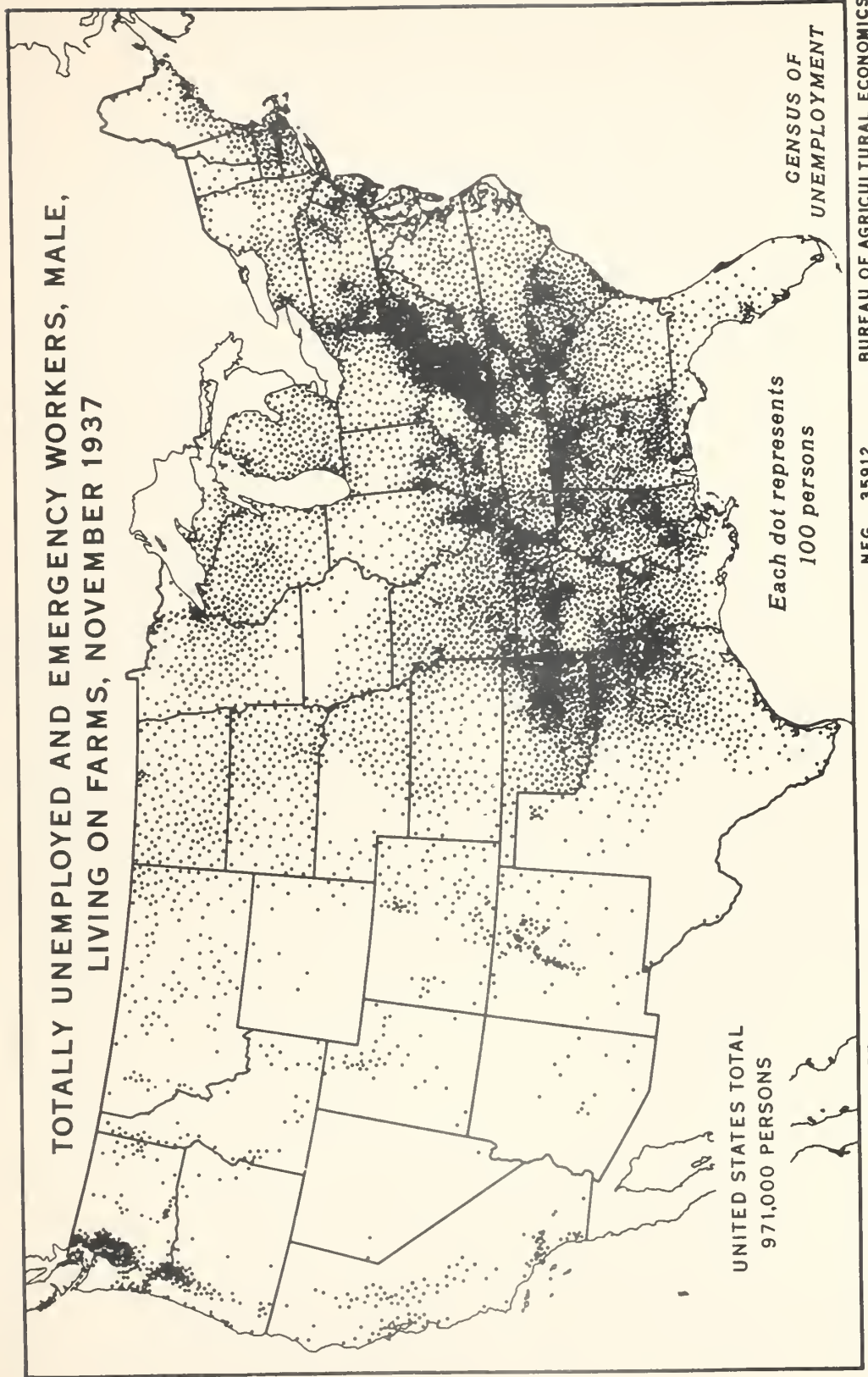
FARM POPULATION

Number, Jan. 1, 1935



About one-half of the farm population of the United States live in the Southern States south of the Potomac and Ohio Rivers and in Arkansas and Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas, less than one-tenth in the 11 far Western States, and four-tenths in the remaining or Northern States. Farm population constitutes 44 percent of the total population in the South, 19 percent in the far west, and 17 percent in the North. Twenty-seven percent of the farm population in the South is Negro or mulatto. Only 23 percent of the colored farm operators in the South own their farms, as compared with 52 percent for white farmers. In the North 68 percent and in the West 74 percent of the farm operators, nearly all white, own their farms.

TOTALLY UNEMPLOYED AND EMERGENCY WORKERS, MALE,
LIVING ON FARMS, NOVEMBER 1937

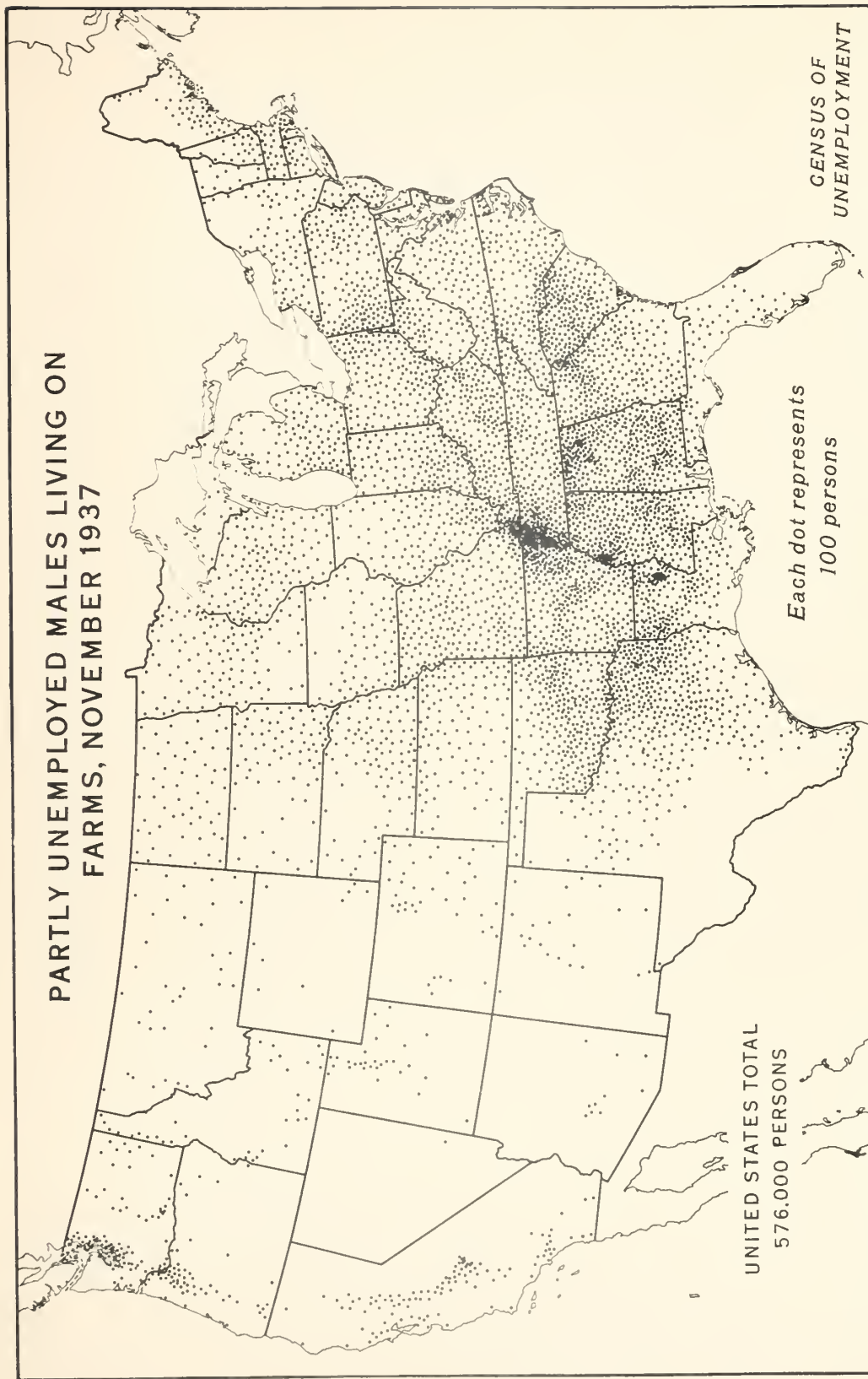


U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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PARTLY UNEMPLOYED MALES LIVING ON
FARMS, NOVEMBER 1937



UNITED STATES TOTAL
576,000 PERSONS

*Each dot represents
100 persons*

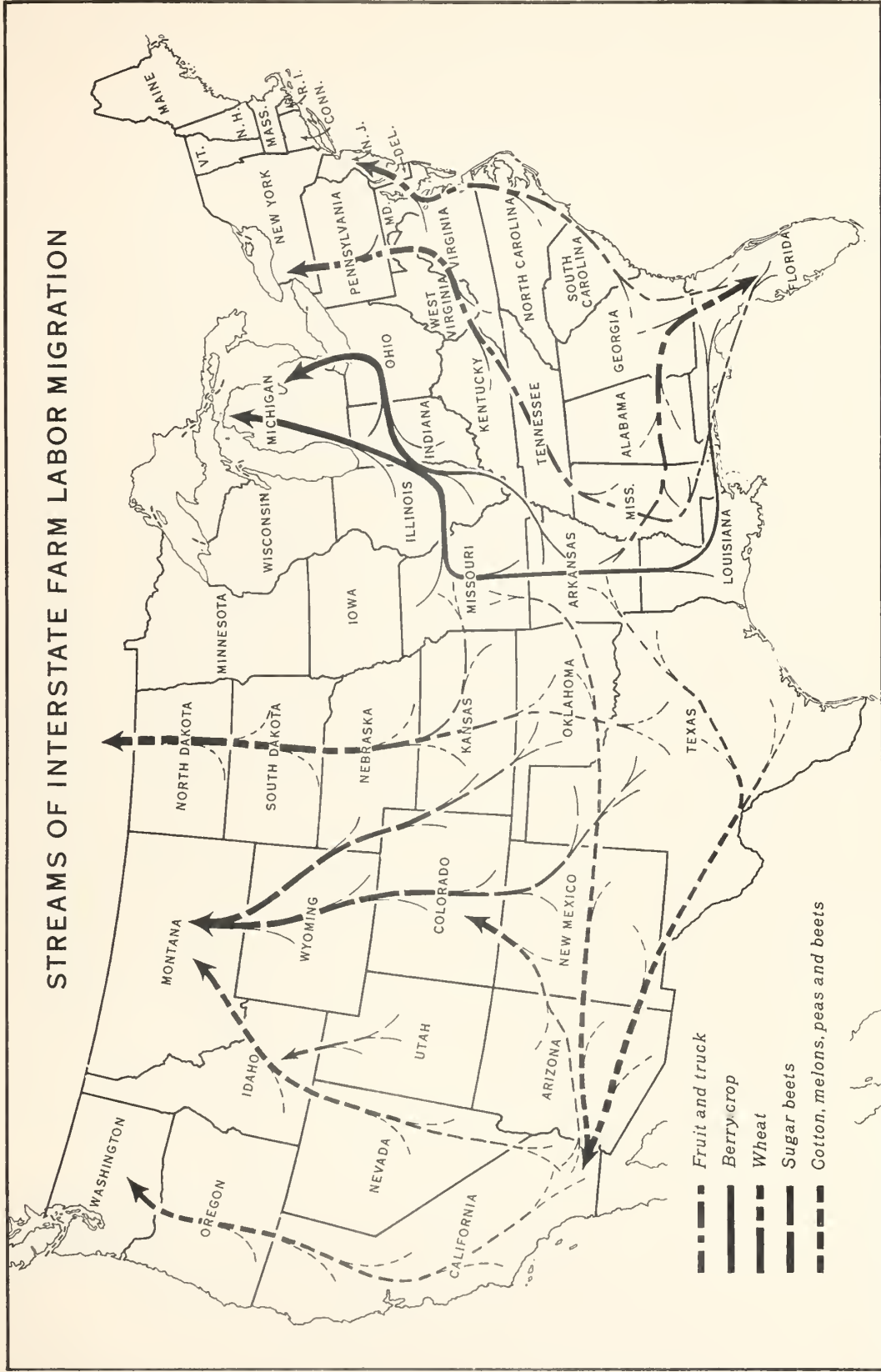
GENSUS OF
UNEMPLOYMENT

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

NEG. 35911

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STREAMS OF INTERSTATE FARM LABOR MIGRATION



NUMBER OF PEOPLE LIVING ON A FARM JAN. 1, 1935, WHO
WERE NOT LIVING ON A FARM 5 YEARS BEFORE

